

ORTHODOX STUDY GROUP – FALL, 2021
ST. ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
SEPTEMBER 15-NOVEMBER 3, 2021
8:00-9:30 PM

THE ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

This Fall, we will focus on the core doctrines of the Orthodox Faith as presented, defended and elucidated in the Seven Ecumenical Councils of Church during the early Byzantine period. Rooted in the understanding of what it means to be saved, the Councils clarified the Christian Faith and emphasized the essential basics. They produced the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the core doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the two natures of Christ. They are open to all and constitute that which is essential. This course will present you the central teachings of the Orthodox Church which are clear and the basis of our salvation.

READINGS:

- Fr. Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith: Church History, Volume 3* (pp.43-105) – as text
- Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware), *The Orthodox Church (Chapter 2)*
- Archimandrite Christoforos (Stavropoulos), *Partakers of Divine Nature* (pp. 17-38) (PDF)

A BASIC TEXTBOOKS:

- Need, *Truly Divine and Truly Human: The Story of Christ and the Seven Ecumenical*

FOR FURTHER ADVANCED READING:

- Fr. John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, pp. 3-31, 99-148
- Stephen W. Fr. John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, pp. 1-53

SCHEDULE:

Week I – September 15

Opening and Introduction

Apostles' Doctrine

What is salvation?

What is necessary?

Readings: Metropolitan Kallistos, *Orthodox Church*, pp. 219-220, 231-238

Archimandrite Christophoros, *Partakers of Divine Nature*, pp. 17-38 (PDF_
Need, *Truly Divine and Truly Human*, pp. 1-15

Week II –September 22

Doctrine in the Early Church

Kerygma and the “Rule of Faith” of St. Irenaeus of Lyon

Heresy and Response

Readings: Fr. Thomas Hopko, *Church History*, pp. 25-49

Need, *Truly Divine and Truly Human*, pp. 17-39

Week III – September 29

Before and after the Edict of Milan, 313

St. Constantine and the First Ecumenical Council

Arius and the Arians

Theology and reception

Readings: Kallistos, pp. 18-22; Hopko, *Church History*, pp. 49-54

Need, *Truly Divine and Truly Human*, pp. 41-62

Week IV – October 13

Reaction to the Council of Nicaea

St. Athanasius of Alexandria and the Cappodocian Fathers

Second Ecumenical Council

Readings: Kallistos, pp. 22-24; Hopko, *Church History*, pp. 54-58

Need, *Truly Divine and Truly Human*, pp. 63-79

Week V – October 20

The Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

Nestorius and St. Cyril of Alexandria

Council and Definition of the Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus)

Monophysites and Diophysites

Council and Definition of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon)

“Two natures of the Word Incarnate without confusions, change, separation, or division”

Chalcedon as the “bedrock of Orthodoxy”

Readings: Kallistos, pp. 24-29; Hopko, *Church History*, pp. 59-68

Need, *Truly Divine and Truly Human*, pp. 81-92, 93-108

Week VI – October 27

Reaction to and acceptance of Chalcedon

Fifth Ecumenical Council – 553

Sixth Ecumenical Council – 680-681

Rejection of Monoenergism and Monotheletism

Readings: Kallistos, pp. 29-30; Hopko, *Church History*, pp. 69-86

Need, *Truly Divine and Truly Human*, pp. 109-128

Week VII – November 3

The Holy Icon – Proof of the Theology of the Councils in Art

Iconoclasts and Iconodules

Seventh Ecumenical Council – Nicaea II -787

St. John of Damascus and St. Theodore of the Studios Monastery

Empresses Irene and Theodora

Triumph of Orthodoxy – 842

Readings, Kallistos, pp. 30-35; Hopko, *Church History*, pp. 91-105

Need, *Truly Divine and Truly Human*, pp. 129-158